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China

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China and World Peace

By H. G. Wells.

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PREFACE

The article on "China" by H. G. Wells, the copyright of which is owned by the Chicago Tribune and the New York World, is herewith reproduced through the courtesy of the Chicago Tribune.

That H. G. Wells is a great writer at the present time is an undisputed fact. His words mean definite things. His views on China as exposed in this article deserve wide circulation, especially at this moment when China needs to be better understood.

As an appendage, we print herewith also the China's program as was laid before the committee on Far Eastern and Pacific problems in the Washington Conference by the Chinese minister, H. E. Sao Ke Alfred Sze.

C. P. C.

China and World Peace

By H. G. WELLS

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The Chinese propaganda in America and western Europe seems on the whole to be conducted more efficiently than the Japanese. And the Chinese student, it seems to me, gets into closer touch with the educated American and European because his is a democratic and not an aristocratic habit of mind. He has an intensely western sense of public opinion.

The masses of China may be destitute, ignorant, and disordered, but in their mental habits they are modern and not medieval, in the sense that the Japanese seem to "get on" with their western social equivalents better than any of the Asiatic people. And increasing multitudes of Chinese are learning English today; it is the second language in China.

Now if Japan is the figure in the limelight at Washington today, China is the giant in the background, or, if you will, China is the background and scene of the present Pacific drama.

We have had so much in the papers lately about these two countries, we have been treated to such a feast of particulars about them that most of us have long since forgotten thoroughly the broad facts of the case and it will be refreshing to recall them here and now.

Let us remind ourselves that China is a country with a population amounting at the lowest estimate to between two and three times the population of the United States, or of France and England put together. This population has the longest unbroken tradition of peace-

ful industry in the world. It is essentially civilized; it respects learning and civility profoundly. A common literature and ancient traditions keep its people one. In the past, China has been divided again and again—always to reunite. But it has become "old fashioned," dangerously old fashioned, perhaps by reason of its very stability; it has lagged behind most of the world in the development of its transport and economic possibilities.

In mineral deposits and other natural resources and in the industrial capability it has more undeveloped wealth than any other single people in the world. It is only in the last century or so that China has lagged behind. Only a few centuries ago China was as civilized as Europe and politically more stable. In a century or so she may be again the most civilized and intelligent power in the world, flourishing in fellowship and perfect understanding with the great states of America and Europe.

She may be—if she is not torn to pieces and kept in a state of enfeeblement and disorder by the hostile action of external powers.

But at present China is in a state of political impatence. Her Manchu imperialism has proved itself to be hopelessly inefficient and China is now struggling to reconstruct upon modern republican lines, obviously suggested by the American example.

A few decades ago Japan astonished the world by Europeanizing herself upon Prussian lines. China now, under far less favorable conditions and with a vaster country and a less disciplined people, is struggling to Americanize herself. But it is no easy task to make over a people at one stride from a medieval autocracy to a modern democracy. It is far easier to Prussianize than to Americanize, for in the one case

you have only to train an official class and in the other you must educate a whole people.

China is torn by dissensions; the south jars with the north; she has two or more governments, each claiming to be THE Chinese government, and whole provinces have fallen under the sway of military adventurers. It is a distressing spectacle, but it was probably an inevitable phase in the development of New China. Before we fall a prey to anti-Chinese propaganda it is well to recall how long it has always taken to build up the necessary understandings and habits of association upon which a new political system rests.

France, for example, was a land of revolutions and political instability for nearly a century after the great revolution. America wrangled feebly anddangerously for several years after thewar of independence before she establishing her federal government; she only cemented her union after a colossal struggle; she was not really and securely one unit until a century had elapsed.

During these long decades of probation foreign observers preached endlessly about the fickleness of the French and the political iefficiency of the Americans and foretold the certainty of a break up of the United States, just as today they sneer at young China and foretell the political disintegration of the Chinese.

And we have to bear in mind that the forces of organization and renewal in China struggle against peculiar difficulties and interferences quite outside the happier experiences of France and America. In particular, they struggle against an intolerable and paralyzing amount of foreign interference.

The brilliant series of adventures and accidents by which a London trading company added the empire of Great Mogul as a picturesque, but incongruously big

jewel to the British crown set an extraordinarily bad precedent in Asiatic affairs. It obsessed European political thought with the impossible dream of carving up all Asia into similar domains. The mogul's empire was itself an empire of conquest in a land saturated by ideas of caste and this gave all the European adventurers the attitude of high caste men benevolently consuming inferior races.

In that spirit, Europe—with Japan coming in presently as a hopeful student of European methods—had been trying to cook, carve up and fight for the portions of China for nearly a century, treating these wonderful people as an inferior race. The very worst that can be said about Japan with regard to China is that she has been too vigorously European.

Consider how it would have been with the United States in the years of discord that led up to the civil war if these difficulties had been complicated by three such embarrassments as there: First, that most foreigners, except now the Germans and Austrians, are outside the reach of the native courts; and their disputes with Chinese go before special foreign courts; that they are specially favored in regard to property and shipping; secondly, that the Chinese government is restricted from raising revenue by any tariff above a flat rate of 5 per cent, and that they are also strictly restricted to 2½ per cent in their interior dues upon foreign (but not Chinese) trade, so that they are in fact unable to raise enough revenue to maintain an efficient government; and, thirdly, that nearly all the Chinese railways—and as every American knows, transport is the very life of a modern state—are in the grip of this foreign country or that.

These are the open and manifest inconveniences of the situation, but behind these more open aspects there is a vast tangle of intervention between Chinese and

Chinese affairs, schemes for further exploitation, financial entanglements, vast concession plans and projects for "spheres of influence" for this aggressive foreign nation or that. And this foreign influence is not the influence of one foreign power pursuing a single and consistent policy, but a number of competing powers, all pursuing different ends and pulling things this way and that. How could any country reconstruct itself while it was entangled in such a net of interference? No people on earth could do such a thing.

The plain fact is that, if China is to reconstruct herself ,that net has to be cut away. It is not enough to warn Japan out of China, or to say "open door" for China. The open door is good for the ventilation of that great apartment, but what is also needed is a clearing out of the incumbrances inside. These incumbrances are not primarily Japanese.

The five great powers sit at a green table in the form of a horseshoe in the conference, and the four lesser powers at a straight table like the armature of a horseshoe magnet. At the left hand corner, next the Japanese, are the three Chinese representatives. I gather that will be allowed to say "Shantung" at the conference in moderation, but not Tibet, nor Tonquin, nor the east China—or indeed any—railway.

I doubt if either Mr. Balfour or M. Briand will nerve himself to say these forbidden words. But an irresponsible journalist may write them.

If there is to be a real end to war and disarmament, there has to be a release of China to free Chinese control, and that means a self-denying ordinance from ALL the great powers. It will be an easy one for America and Italy to accept, but it will be a difficult sacrifice, indeed, for the two hoary leaders in the breakup of China, Great Britain and France. Neither

country has a bad heart, but long ago in the east they acquired some very bad habits lead very quickly to disaster.

The real test of the quality of the conference will appear when some issue arises which involves an assertion or denial of the principle of "unhand and keep your hands off China." If the Chinese are worth while the conference has to establish that principle. It cannot be gracefully advanced by America because America has so little to relinquish. It CAN be established at the initiative of either Britain or France. It seems plain to me that official America is waiting for some move in that direction from either or both of these powers. If that principle of a free China is established at the Washington conference the way will have been opened in the not very remote future to a healthy and vigorous United States of China, a great modern, pacific, and progressive power.

And when I write "China," I mean what any sensible man means when he writes "China." I mean all those parts of Asia in which the Chinese people and the Chinese culture prevail. I include at least south Manchuria, which is as surely Chinese as Texas is American, and which can no more be given to any other power without the consent of China than my overcoat can be given by one passerby to another.

The plan alternative to a released and renascent China is the cutting up of China among the aggressive powers to the tune of the popular American air "The Open Door," the demoralization and disintegration of the Chinese, international elbowing, competition, quarrels among the powers who have "shared" China and at last, the next great war—which it will be just as aesy for America to keep out of as the great war of 1914-18.

CHINA'S PROGRAM BEFORE WASHINGTON CONFERENCE

China's statement of principles, as outlined on Nov. 16, 1921, before the committee on Pacific and Far Eastern problems, by the Chinese minister, Dr. Sze, follows:

"In view of the fact that China must necessarily play an important part in the deliberations of this conference with reference to the political situation in the Far East, the Chinese delegation has thought it proper that they should take the first possible opportunity to state certain general principles which in their opinion should guide the conference in the determinations which it is to make.

"Certain of the specific applications of the principles which it is expected that the conference will make, it is our intention later to bring forward, but at the present time it is deemed sufficient simply to propose the principles which I shall presently read.

"In formulating these principles, the purpose has been kept steadily in view of obtaining rules in accordance with which existing and possible future political and economic problems in the Far East and the Pacific may be most justly settled, and with due regard to the rights and legitimate interests of all the powers concerned.

"Thus it has been sought to harmonize the particular interests of China with these general interests of all the world. China is anxious to play her part, not only in maintaining peace, but in promoting the material advancement and the cultural development of all the nations. She wishes to make her vast natural resources available to all peoples who need them, and in return to receive the benefits of free and equal intercourse with them.

"In order that she may do this it is necessary that she should have every possible opportunity to develop her political institutions in accordance with the genius and needs of her own people. China is now contending with certain difficult problems which necessarily arise, when any country makes a radical change in her form of government.

"These problems she will be able to solve if given the opportunity to do so. This means not only that she should be freed from the danger or threat of foreign aggression, but that, so far as circumstances will possibly permit, she be relieved from limitations which now deprive her of autonomous administrative action and prevent her from securing adequate public revenues.

"In conformity with the agenda of the conference, the Chinese government proposes for the consideration of and adoption by the conference the following general principles to be applied in the determining of the questions relating to China:

"1. (a) The powers engage to respect and observe the territorial integrity and political and administrative independence of the Chinese republic.

"(b) China, upon her part, is prepared to give an undertaking not to alienate or lease any portion of her territory or littoral to any power.

"2. China, being in full accord with the principle of the so-called open door, or equal opportunity for the commerce and industry of all nations having treaty relations with China, is prepared to accept and apply it in all parts of the Chinese republic without exception.

"2. With a view to strengthening mutual confidence and maintaining peace in the Pacific and the Far East, the powers agree not to conclude between themselves any treaty or agreement directly affecting China or the general peace in these regions without previously

notifying China and giving to her an opportunity to participate.

"4. All special rights, privileges, immunities, or commitments, whatever their character or contractural basis, claimed by any of the powers in or relating to China, are to be declared, and all such or future claims not so made known are to be deemed null and void. The rights, privilleges, immunities and commitments, now known or to be declared, are to be examined with a view to determining their scope and validity, and, if valid, to harmonize them with one another and with the principles declared by this conference.

"5. Immediately or as soon as circumstances will permit, existing limitations upon China's political jurisdictianal and administrative freedom of action are to be removed.

"6. Reasonable, definite terms of duration are to be attached to China's present commitments which are without time limits.

"7. In the interpretation of instruments granting special rights or privileges, the well established principle of construction that such grants shall be strictly construed in favor of the grantors is to be observed.

"8. China's rights as a neutral are to be fully respected in future wars to which she is not a party.

"9. Provision is to be made for the peaceful settlement of international disputes in the Pacific and the Far East.

"10. Provision is to be made for future conferences to be held from time to time for the discussion of international questions relative to the Pacific and the Far East, as a basis for the determination of common policies of the signatory powers in relation thereto."

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